1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

even death are often traced to this influence. A woman is more likely to have an evil eye than a man. Kols believe that Gond women should be avoided as far as possible for many of them are said to have an evil eye that is likely to affect children. A well-dressed person is more likely to be affected than a poorly dressed one, and to put on fine clothes is to attract attention and therefore invite danger.

The evil eye may also be directed against animals and plants; so a bad crop, or the illness or death of an animal, may be due to some one with an evil eye. Pumpkins are often trained to grow upon the roof of Kol houses and may be protected from the evil eye by white-washing an ordinary flat tile, making a cross in the centre with lamp-black, and putting upon the tile as many dots as there are pumpkins growing upon the roof. This will protect them and no pumpkin will rot. A rotted pumpkin is the sure sign of the activity of this mysterious force.

The time of eating is a particularly dangerous one from the point of view of the evil eye. No stranger should come into the presence of one who is taking his meal, and at that time he should turn his back on all people, including even the members of his own household. If one possessed of the evil eye should see the face of a person taking his food it may have a serious result. Therefore it is wise never to interrupt a man at his meals; this a stranger will never do. If accidentally confronted in this way, the eater should stop his meal and wait till the person has passed out of sight. To be seen in the act of putting on new clothes is also to expose oneself to the dangers of the evil eye, should such a person happen by.

WHAT THESE FORCES DO. We have seen something of the supernormal powers which the average Kol feels are all about him. What do these powers bring to pass? Some indication of this has been given already, but more may be stated. Diseases, particularly wasting diseases, are surely due to the presence of evil spirits or the spell of the evil eye. Any mysterious disease may be ascribed to these powers. Ill luck is also due to the attention of the forces named above. A man may be tripped up: it is the work of a spirit; he cuts his hand: a *bhut* directed the axe. We were told of a certain evil spirit dwelling in a banyan tree on the Great Deccan Road near Katni. He was particularly annoyed by cyclists: probably he could not get used to the march of civilization. This spirit was especially active at midday and midnight, and if a cyclist should fail to show respect, by not dismounting and walking by the tree at those particular hours, he was sure to be killed. It was commonly reported

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775 776 789 MEETING A SPIRIT. Even though properly protected from spiritual forces one is still not immune from their attacks. If one should meet a spirit it is always proper to be very respectful in its presence and to try not to offend it in any way. If the *bhut* is addressed as one would address a gentleman he may behave like one. If one moves further on and the *bhut* insists on following, the person attended may, provided he is properly protected by charms, call out the name of Khermai three or four times in rapid succession. Her very name is so powerful that the evil spirit is helpless and goes away disgusted. But should the person not be properly protected by amulets and the like, he should not call upon Khermai.

If it should be necessary to pass the known dwelling place of a *bhut* or other spirit, the person should first stop and respectfully ask the spirit to let him pass safely. No person should be boastful in the presence of a spirit nor use the name of Khermai except as a last resort. The spirit should be addressed as "Maharaj" if a male, and [576] if a female as "Mata". These respectful forms of address are pleasing to them and they will allow such people to pass without harm.

789 [791] HOW SPIRITS MAY BE CAST OUT. Evil spirits may be cast out only by those who know the secret processes and *mantras* necessary, and such secrets are usually carefully guarded by the initiated. The *panda* is probably familiar with methods although not all of them [648] would admit that they were, and a member of the Baiga tribe is *par excellence* the man. The *bawa* is usually associated with this ceremony.

The *supa* method, forms of which are described below, is the usual method of driving out an evil spirit. Again, the priest while possessed of the *devi* may order the family to perform certain rites, such as feeding the group, sacrificing at the shrine, abstaining from rich foods, and the like; or he may even beat the unfortunate being with his iron lash until the blood flows. This will surely frighten the demon away.

There is another form known to the Kols by the name of *jharna*, [824] 'the sifting or winnowing'. A *supa* (winnowing fan), a *hansiya* (sickle) and a bit of *Kans* grass (*Saccharium spontaneum*) are made use of in [785] this particular wave ceremony. The person on whom these will be used must have fasted for a period and have had *mantras* pronounced over him, then the above articles are one by one waved over him. The sickle, the grass and the winnowing fan are all symbolical of removing a spirit: the sickle, as it is first waved, symbolizes the cutting down of the spirit, the grass implies the work is done, and in the sifting

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it is like the chaff being driven away and lost. While the *supa* is being waved the Baiga blows, and thus the divine afflatus is communicated to the person.

There is also a magic way of warding off the evil eye and removing its power from one affected by it. A Baiga is called, who, after the usual preparations and offerings, takes a stick and dips it in *til* oil. This is lighted and held over a vessel filled with water, all being performed in the presence of the person suspected of being the victim of the evil eye. If drops of the burning oil fall into the water with a hissing sound the person affected at once begins to feel the influence of the evil eye passing from him. But if the hairs on his body begin to stand up and he begins to feel faint, it is a sure sign that something is wrong and that there is an evil spirit in the case, or that the power of the evil eye requires still stronger measures to remove it.

Kols also believe in, and practise, what may conveniently be called "cross-roads magic". The afflicted person is carried on a bed to the particular cross-roads where the ceremony is to be performed. He is set down in the centre and the friends who brought him make the offerings, which should be sacrificed in the same way as they would be at the village shrine. This may be done at any time of the day or night, but to be really effective it should not be witnessed by any stranger. If some one should approach while the sacrifices are being offered he will be warned away, for if he comes he may break the spell or may himself be affected. It is thought that the disease afflicting the person is loosed at the cross-roads and will attach itself to the first person who passes that way. For this reason Kols usually avoid cross-roads and if possible will pass by some other way. Sometimes a scape animal is released after the offerings are made, and it is believed that he will carry the disease away.

MEDICINES AND MAGIC. Among Kols illness and disease are often ascribed to the work of unfriendly spirits. Cholera and small-pox are particularly the work of the goddesses, and only through them can they be controlled. Other diseases are due to lesser evil spirits. In spite of this, there is also the attitude that in many cases illness is due to the foolishness of man, and that many types of illness can be cured by means of home remedies. Failing these, or any other explanation, the illness is looked upon as indeed the work of a spirit. There are many remedies in use by the Kols for the diseases which abound in India, and the remedies in common use among them are listed below.

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dipped into the water and the solution is then taken. Following the taking of the *gurj* solution a lemon is cut in half and salted and peppered. The two halves are left on the roof over-night and should be sucked the next morning. Another report is that a good remedy for malaria is to grind together *golmirich* (black pepper), *long* (cloves), and *mitha lakri* (licorice). The paste is put into a bit of water and swallowed

Pain in the abdomen: this is relieved by rubbing a mixture of kerosene and mustard oil over the affected part.

Smallpox: there is no remedy for this, as it is due to a goddess and her will, but care should be taken that the patient takes only light foods during this period.

Snake bites: one should chew leaves of the *nim* tree. Crooke notes that "in Ahmednagar when a man is bitten by a snake he is taken to Bahiroba's temple, crushed Nim leaves mixed with chillies are administered, and the branches are waved over his head."[1]

Stomach trouble: for this the leaves of the *Babul* tree, (*Acacia arabica*) should be chewed and eaten.

Swellings: if it be the thighs that have swelled, *ghi* should be applied and rubbed in well. At the same time *Hing* paste (a variety of asafetida) should be applied to the nails of the leg affected.

Wounds: *chuna* (lime) is mixed with the juice of the *Kattha* tree (*Acacia catechu*) and the paste applied. The juice of this tree has good astringent qualities.

Fresh cow dung is very commonly applied, especially to the wounds of children.

The bark of the *Tinsa* tree (*Eugenia dalbergioides*) is ground into a paste and stops the bleeding from a wound.

For the wounds made by thrusting the iron trident through the tongue or cheek at the *jawara* season, the following mixture should be applied: Lime juice, some ground onion, *ghi*, wood ashes and *pan* leaves (*Piper betel*).

It is usual that each village has its *baid* or medicine man who suggests these simple remedies and advises what should be done. However, there may be no such person in the village, and even if there is such, the Kols have great faith in the Baiga, and may go to him.

1 Crooke, W., *Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India*, p. 410.

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648 Kols, Baigas and Gonds live in close association under village conditions. The Baiga priest is revered by both Kols and Gonds, and it is asserted that he has a *deva* living within him which gives him insight as to what should be done. The Baiga, however, is more interested in the occult than he is in prescribing remedies, and if he believes the illness is due to a spirit, he performs over the ill person the *supa* ceremony. It is said that he takes a *supa* (winnowing fan) and places on it a little lamp (*diya*), *ghi* being used to make it burn. The Baiga sits before this and begins to mumble *mantras* and to concentrate on the fire. He calls the *devi* or *deva* when he feels that the time is ripe. When the *devi* arrives, the Baiga falls down in a trance, for the spirit has full possession of him and speaks through him to the people present, telling them just what they must do. This usually takes the form of the demand for some offering to be made either to the goddess speaking through the Baiga or to some other deity named by her, generally an animal: a chicken, goat or pig. As soon as the trance is over, the members of the household begin to take steps to fulfil the words spoken through the Baiga, for the man should start to mend as soon as the offerings are accomplished. If nothing is done, the *devi* will be angry, and the patient is almost sure to die. Should the man die in spite of the offerings, it is said that something was probably wrong with them and the *devi* was not pleased. This ceremony is termed by the Kols *totak vidha*, and requires the winnowing fan, the lamp burning in an earthen vessel, and the presence of the deity. For this service the Baiga charges a fee depending upon the capacity of the family to pay. The fee is decided on by the Baiga after careful inquiry and is said usually to be high. If it should not be paid, the *devi* is angered and the man may die. Sometimes, they say, the ceremony puts them in debt, hence they may hesitate to call in a Baiga.

755 [516] [823] Another form of the *supa* ceremony is this: the person from whom a spirit or a disease is to be cast is told to sit cross-legged on the ground, facing east. Those who cure come from that holy direction, made holy because the sun rises from there. Water is sprinkled on the *supa* cleansing it. The person is then fanned by the sorcerer, first from the front and then from the back. As he does this he repeats certain *mantras* supposed to be efficacious in driving evil away. The man is asked to move a few feet away from the *supa* lest it be not exactly the right spot, and the process is repeated.

[237] The sickle is often used in casting out spirits and diseases. The person is asked to sit facing the east. Ashes from burnt cow dung are blown over him from the hand of the Baiga, and then the sickle is waved over and about his head. This will drive the demons away.

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789 WITCHCRAFT. Magic, it has been seen, is very characteristic of the Kols and religion and magic are inextricably mixed, so that it is hard to say where one begins and the other leaves off. The Kol priest is sometimes learned in magic lore and may know the processes of black magic as well as white magic. Instances of white magic have been scattered throughout this study. And yet it is our belief that Kols are not over familiar with magic and witchcraft. Roy has a statement in his book on the Kharias which I feel is true of the Kols whom we have studied. The quotation follows:

789 171

> As we have said, the methods of magic and witchcraft, practised in Chota-Nagpur and its adjoining territories inhabited by the Kharias, would appear to be generally common among Kharias as well as among their neighbours, both aboriginal and low-class Hindu. In fact, there are good reasons to believe that the methods of magic and witchcraft now practised in common by practitioners of the magic art among Hindu castes and Hinduised tribes of these parts as well as among the comparatively advanced aboriginal tribes such as the Oraons, the Mundas, the Santals, the Hos, and the Kharias, have been in great part derived from one main common source, probably the ancient Dravidian peoples of Mediterranean origin. Not that the pre-Dravidian tribes like the Kharias were altogether strangers to the art. In fact, the magic incantations even among the rudest aboriginal tribes have always been resorted to, and believed to work wonders; the occult powers of certain words, names and numbers, and even of animals and reptiles, and certain herbs, grains and other inanimate objects is dreaded.[1]

754 [648] With Kols witchery and the evil eye go together and a woman is more likely to be a witch than a man. Gond women particularly, it was noted, should be suspected and kept at a distance. The true witch is not such through any power acquired by her, but is rather born a witch from the very beginning; the gift though, may be trained and the art developed. The witch's power frequently depends upon his or her control over the supernormal powers and spirits which are at beck and call and which can be sent out on missions of evil. We did not come across any actual witches. They were said to be found "in another village".

Witches are able to cast spells which reach far beyond the range of normal powers and are able to work havoc against whomsoever they are directed. It was found that these spells could be sent from Jubbulpore "even to Rewa"; that they travelled with great speed like an aeroplane, and that they would reach distant places within an hour or an hour and a half. If the spell should be directed against a particular person in a village it will fall somewhere in or near

1 Roy, S. C., *The Kharias*, p. 410.

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159 I have tried to be an honest man and the police and government
[648 forest officers trust me and have just offered me the post of *Sarkari*
622] *Mukaddam* (government headman) of my village. This is a very high
554] honour for me for which my friends will respect me very much.

BAJRANJI: A KOL AND A FAMINE[1]

I was born in Rewa, my *desh*, but I have no idea of the date of my birth nor of the names of my father or mother. When my parents left Rewa and came to Barela I was just an infant and didn't know much about what was going on. After three or four years my father died in Lunsar village while my mother died in Barela when I was thirty years old.

When my father died I did not get much property, but whatever I got was used up in feeding the people of the community at the time of his death, and later on more was spent on the ceremonial feast following my mother's death. At that time I had a few head of cattle, but soon after four of them were killed and eaten by tigers.

I have been married twice, and by my first wife had two children. The first child was a girl who is now married and who has children of her own. She is about twenty-one years old now. The second child was a boy who is now about twelve years of age. But when these children were about twelve and eight respectively their mother became
[587] very ill and died. Whatever money I had, all was spent on her for her recovery, but it was of no use. Then I married another wife and
[434] this cost me to a great extent the remaining money that I had. Between the two I spent all the money which I possessed, which was about Rs. 300/- in cash and I found myself moneyless.

When I was a boy I was very eager to learn, but it was very difficult for a Kol to think of studying with the Brahmins. The village school seemed reserved for them. So my parents could not send me and they didn't care much about my education, and though I couldn't
[212] study I made friends with an educated boy and he helped me and I finished the first Hindi book, but that too I have forgotten and cannot now read nor write.

When my mother died there were three of us: my sister, my
[164] brother and myself. Both my brother and sister have since died of plague here in Barela, but I was saved by God's grace. About eight years ago my brother died leaving his wife and children. I do not
[595] keep her with me in our home for I know that it would be hard on me and my wife and that if I keep her it would really mean that there will

1 See plate XXVI.